# THE DEFENCE OF GOOD

women, deuised and made by Sir Thomas Elyot knyght.

ANNO. M. D. XL. V.

1534

## The argument.

A Contencion betwene two gentill men, the one named Caninius, the other Candidus. Caninius, like a curre, at womens condicions is alway barkyng: but Candidus, whiche maie be interpreted, benigne or gentill, iudgeth euer well, and reproueth but seldom. Betwene them two, the estimacion of womankinde cometh in question. After long disputacion, wherin Candidus (as reason is) hath the preheminence, at the last, for a perfect conclusion, Queene Zenobia (which liued aboute the yere after the incarnacion of Christe. 274. the noble Aureliane being emperour of Rome) by the example of hir life, confirmeth his argumentes, and also vanquissheth the obstinate mynd of froward Caninius, and so endeth the matier.

45 b. 30 /042.

# CANINIVS, CANDIDVS, ZENOBIA

## CANINIVS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SVCHE IS THE condicion of Venus derlynges, so longe as they bee stirred with pleasant affectiõs, they be still insensible in the kelyng of Sapience. Ye all do knowe Candidus, kinsman to Aureliane the emperour that nowe is, an honest yonge gentilman, well lerned and courtaise, so that his nobleneſſe doth apere in his maners. Yesterdaye did I see hym deuisyng with ladies, wherby I coniected, that he was a louer, and therfore I lamẽted. And as he hapned to come by me, I rouned him in the eare

and saide to him softely: Beware noble yong man, I perceiue ye be gyued, plucke out your legges ere the boltes be riueted. Thereat he smiled, and laiyng his hand vpon mine, he saide to me priuely: I wot what ye meane. I pray you be to morowe with me at Tiburtum, whiche is but a littell out of the citie, where I haue a faire and commodious lodging, there shal we soupe with some other gentilmen. And there wil I vanquishe youre wilfull opinion conceiued against women: or elles I being vanquished with sufficient reason, wil from henseforth leaue al mine affection. And so departed he from me. This is Tiburtum, for yonder is the palaice of Hadrian, well Candidus will not be longe, his noble nature wil not let him breke pro-

pzomise: foz lacke of faithe defa-
ceth al vertues. CANDIDVS. Ye
spake neuer a moze true sentence,
noz a moze honest. foz vndoubted-
ly faith, which some do call truste,
is of iustice so gret a pozcion, that
without it, neither god maie bee
pleased, noz any weale Publyke
may be surely stablished. And thei
which do lacke it them selfes, with
a littel touche bzoken be not a lit-
tle offended. CANINIVS. It is
truely spoken, and nowe to talke
of the matter, foz the which ye wil-
led me to mete with you, here is
nowe happened a righte good oc-
casion. CANDI. Ye meane the
matier concernyng women, which
we two now haue taken vpon vs.
CANINI. Euen the same maister
Candidus. CANDI. Goe to on
goddes name: what haue ye to

charge with all women? CANI. Nay first I praye you tell me one thyng that I will aske of you. Be not ye of that sect of philosophers called Pirhonici? CANDI. What meane ye therby? I know not that secte: yet haue I sene a good parte of philosophie. CANI. It is the sect which affirmeth, that nothing is in deede as it seemeth to be, saiyng, that snowe is blacke and not white, the erth is not stable but euer mouing, & many an other froward affection, contrary to trueth and all common reason. CANDI. No no Caninius, I neuer fauoured suche vaine opinion. CANI. yet many one doth, changing onely the termes. For sens snowe is so often times sene, they feare to say that it is blacke, leste they shoulde therfore be laughed to scorne. But

ver-

vertue, who is not so commonly seene, and of so many menne loked on, is nowe of diuerse men so peruersely estemed, that it is of some called folye, of many men fantasy, and of some curiositie. Also the fauourers therof are littell sette by, as persons vnprofitable and nothyng worldly. But to our purpose, I asked of you, if ye wer of the secte called Pirhonici: for if ye so were, I wolde thinke it vaine to reason then with you. But ye saie, ye be not of that sect, then is it as I said at my first commyng hither. CANDI. What is that I praye you? CANI. ye that be louers be dull and insensible in feeling of Sapience. for although ye be informed by daily experience, that in woman kinde faithe neuer rested, yet be you still as

blind as your littell god Cupide, for the childish affections which ye beare to your ladies, causeth you to think the thinges which ye se, to be nothing but vanities. CANDI. Now in good faith that is merily spoken. CANI. Wel yet, some haue repented them bitterly finding the linke sodainly broken, and in the stede of faith falshod and trechery. CANDI. Nay ye now do but rail I promise you truly. in dede both by reding and heresay I haue found women much blamed for their inconstancy: but for mine own knowlage I neuer perceiued any suche lacke to be in them, but rather the contrary. CANI. Sir by the consent of al autours my wordes be confirmed, and your experience in comparison therof is to be littel estemed. CANDI. I perceiue ye be of

the company, whiche disapointed
somtime of your purpose, ar fallen
in a frenesy, and for the displesure
of one, do spring on all women the
poyson of infamie. But nowe Ca-
ninius, sense ye be wise and wel ler
ned, subdue your passion, for vnpa
cient hering, with wordes hastely
and vnaduisedli spoken, is a signe
of foly and litel discreció. wherfore
now here me speke thoughe it shal
not sauour to your opinion. The
authors whom ye so muche do set
by, for the more part were poetes,
which lost of persõs among the la-
tines & grekes wer neuer had but
in smal reputacion. For I could ne-
uer rede that in any weale publike
of notable memory, Poetes were
called to any honorable place, of-
fice, or dignity. Plato out of the pu
blike weale which he had deuised,
poetes

wolde haue all poetes vtterly ex=
cluded. Tulli, who next vnto Pla
to excelled all other in vertue and
eloquence, wolde not haue in his
publike weale any poetes admit-
ted. The cause why they were soo
litell estemed was, for as muche
as the more part of their inuenci=
ons consisted in leasinges, or in
sterying vp of wanton appetites,
or in pouryng out, in railynge,
their poison of malice. For with
their owne goddes and goddesses
were they so malaperte, that with
their aduoutris they filled great
volumes. Iupiter, whom thei cal
kyng of goddes and of men, they
bryng hym out of heauen to his
harlottes transfourmed somtime
into a bull, an other tyme lyke a
ramme, a stinkyng gote or a ser=
pent. His quene Iuno lyke a

cowe

cowe. Mercurius like a wulfe. Ne they lefte heauen vnpolluted, fainynge that the god Mars made Vulcane cokeolde, committynge aduoutry with Venus, wife to Vulcanus. But Vulcane was a wily pye, and saíd nothynge, but being a smythe, he made such suttell manakles, that er the two louers were ware, he tyed theim so faste to gether, that they mought not be seuered: and than called he the hole route of goddes and goddesses, and made them to se Mars and Venus where they lay naked, wherat thei al lewghe, but Mars was angry, and Venus allmost ashamed. Other poetes there be, which in their mooste lamentable and wofull ditties so doe humble them selfes to their maistresses, as thei wold licke the dust from their slip=

slippers, and as soone as eyther by age, or with hauntyng of bothelles, the flame of carnalitie is throughly quenched, or elles if women do constantly refuse their vnhoneſt desires, anone arme thei their pennes and tonges with serpentine malice, obiectyng against al womē most beastly condicions. Wherby they more detect their propre inconstancy, then womennes vnfaithfulneſſe. CANI. Now in good faithe ye haue well circumscribed your maisters proprieties. CANDI. Whom call ye my maisters? CANI. Mary poetes. for in their warkes is the onely study of you that be louers. For that boke, whiche lacketh complaintes with weppynges and sighinges, is to you men that be amorous wonderfull tedious. CANDI. Truely

ly Canintus ye are muche abused, takyng me to be of that sorte of wantons. Nay truely. Trewe louers, of which company I confesse my selfe to be one, are in no parte of their condicions. for onely delityng in the honest behauour, wisedome and gentilnesse of ladies, or other matrones or damselles, we therfore desire to be in their companies, and by mutuall deuisyng to vse honest solace. But shewe me Caninius, what other auctoritie haue ye, to proue that in womenne lacketh fidelitie. CANI. Why set ye so littell by poetes and poetry? CANDI. Ye whan they excede the termes of honestie. But if they make verses, conteynyng quicke sentences, void of ribauldry, or in the commendacion of vertue some pratie allegory, or do set forth any notable

notable story, that do I set by the as they be well worthy. CANI. If ye wil geue no credence to poetes, what saye ye to philosophers and writers of stories, with whome ye maye fynde suche abundaunce of examples and sentences of the fals hode of women and their vnhappinesse, that if they shuld be rehersed, I trowe ye wolde not abide it, I knowe so your shamefastnesse. CANDI. Truely none of theim, which wer them selues honest and continente, haue written in dispraise of the hole kinde of women. What hath Plato, Xenophon, Plotinus, and Plutarch, or other philosophers like vnto them, written in that matier, wherby they haue made them inferiour to men: or if they haue in womenne any thyng blamed, it may appere to be but in

some

some, and not in the moze parte, if it be wel and sincerely considered. And also in stozies, where one woman perchaunce is foz some faute dispraised, that is counterpeised with a great numbze foz their vertue commended. Now I pzay you was Helene, foz whom Troy was destroyed (beyng rauished by Paris) so much to be blamed, as Hercinia the wyfe of Romulus, and moze than a thousand of her compantons, are to be pzayed, whiche in the rage of batayle toyned betwene their husbandes and parentes, so reconciled theim, that with one consent they inhabyted one citie, and liued together in perpetuall vnitie: Ought the vnchastitie of any womã to be so remembzed, as the continence of queene Penelope ought to be honozed: who in

Horsilia

Penelope

the

the absence of Ulixes her husbād, the space of .xx. yeres, kept her honour and fame vncorrupted, notwithstandyng that with many diuerse wowers she was dayely assaulted, but by no maner of meane moughte she be founden, by dede word nor countinance in hir chast purpose vnconstant. And to resist carnall affections, she was alway sene, although she were a queene and a kinges doughter, vertuously occupied. What cause founde Paris to forsake his first lady Denone, but onely that the beaulty of Helene was muche more famous? And yet his cruell vnkindenesse mought not exclude loue from hir ientill herte, but she remainynge still continente, after that Paris was slaine by Achilles, she with exclamacions & effusions of teares

res entred into the chariot, where his carcaise lay, and when she had bained her fayre lippes in his putrified woundes, and had saciate hir self with mortal solace, finally she there died oppressed with heuinesse. But because these be of some men taken for fables, I wyl briefly declare the faythfulnesse of dyuerse women rehersed in stories. In the host of the noble kyng Cyrus, was a great prince (as Xenophon wryteth) whose name was Abratades, whoo had to his wyfe a faire lady named Panthea of excellent beaulty: this prince being slayne in battayle, she attaynynge his body, and with her owne handes washynge the woundes, and imbaulmyng it after the facion of her owne countrey, she in the presence of Cyrus, with a knif, which

panthea

she had priuely hydde, semyng in
wordes and countenance desirous
to be with her husband, whom she
mooste tenderly loued, she perced
her owne herte, and with him was
buried: not withstandynge that of
kyng Cyrus, whom her husband
had muche praysed a littel before,
she was in mariage desyred. Por-
ouria cia, doughter to the wise Cato, and
wife vnto Brutus, whan she had
heard of the death of her husband,
finding occasion to be alone from
her seruantes, she takyng the hote
burning coles out of a chimnay,
deuoured them hastely, and forth-
with died. Also whan Seneca by
the sentence of the cruell Nero the
emperour, was condemned to die,
his wife called Paulina, desirous
aulina to be contynuall companion with
her olde husband, caused also her
veynes

veines to be perced, and so wolde haue died, had not Nero commanded her vaines to be bounde, & the bloude to be stopped. She notwithstandinge afterwarde lyued in sorowe contynuall moze paynefulle than deathe, and duringe her life, her dedely pale colour declared to all men, whiche befoze knewe her, the bytter sozowes, whiche foz her husbande she alway susteined. In the tyme of the cruell confederacy of Lepidus, Octauiane, and Antony, a gentylman called Ligarius, was by his wife and a mayden seruant, kept at Rome in his hous pziuely: but what foz feare of punishmente, and hope of rewarde, he at the last was discouered, whō beyng ledde to be beheded, his louynge wyfe continually folowed, desyzyng the ministers to put her

also to death with her husband, al leging, that also to die she had wel deserued, for as muche as she had kepte her husband at home, after that she knew that he was attainted: but seeyng that no man dyd take regarde to her harty request, she returned home to her house, & shuttyng faste all the doores, and absteynynge from all meates and dryukes, finally with sorowe and famyne she ended her lyfe, and departed to het husbande, whom she so muche loued. But lest we shuld be to longe from our supper, I wil cesse to recite any mo stories, wher of there be no litel numbre, declarynge the constance of ladies and damselles. And if ye wolde saye, that there hath ben and is a much greatter numbre of theim that are ill, and full of vnfaithfulnesse, yet

if

if that wer true, than muſt ye conſider, that in al kindes of thinges, are commonly found moze warſe than better, oz elles ſhoulde good thinges lacke theyz eſtimacion, as it ſhall appere by this concluſion. Foz he that neuer hath ſene any other metall than golde, maruayleth not at it, noz in his eſtimacion ſetteth much by it. And where ther be none other ſtoones founde but Diamandes, Saphyzes, Emeraudes, and Rubyes, there men do treade on theym, and ſell theim foz trifles. But if one ſhulde come to a countreye, whiche ſemed barrayne, couered with an infynyte numbze of ſtones ragged, of yl colour and facion, if he chaunce to fynde here and there a pointed Diamande, wel pzopozcioned and orient: I dare ſaye, he wyll laie vp

those fewe Diamandes as a great treasure, and not remembryng the ragged stones, in the beholdynge of them, take noo littell pleasure: Semblably although a greatte numbre of women perchance were vicious, yet oughte not a man reproche therfore the hole kynde of women, sense of them vndoubtedly many be vertuous. CANINI. Ye haue wel assembled thinges for your purpose. But what saie you to Aristotel, whom ye haue skypte ouer, in the nampynge of philosophers: he saith, that a woman is a worke of nature vnperfecte. And moreouer, that her proprietie is to delyte in rebukyng, and to be alway complaynyng, and neuer contented. Nowe take heede maister Candidus. Perfection is euer constante and neuer chaungeth, but a woman

Φιλολοί δορου καὶ μεμψιμοιρον.

woman is a creature vnperfit, she therfore mai neuer be stable or constante. ye knowe this fourme of argument, for I espy by your talkyng ye ar lerned in logike. More ouer, rebukynge is a mislykynge, and no man myslyketh the thynge that he loueth, but all that he loueth he fauoureth and lyketh: but women of their nature do delite in rebukynge, and the thynge, wherin any persō deliteth, he coueteth, and coueytyng it, he wil at the last (if it be in his power) execute it. Women therfore lackyng some other, on whom they maye practise theyr propertie, wyll rebuke some time theyr husbandes, whom perchaunce they loued: and than misliketh she the thing that she erst loued. wherfore ye muste graunte, that she is vnconstante. Also who

that is neuer contente, may neuer be constant, the cause why is to al men apparant. Wherfore there nedeth not any more argument, women for these reasons that I haue reherſed, be of their nature alwaie vnconstant. is it not thus? Nowe knacke me that nut maister Candidus. I trow it be to hard for your teth, although ye were as wel toothed as Curius Dentatus, which as men say, helde faste a ship with his teth vntil it was taken. CANDI. In good faith Cannius ye ar a mery companion. But although my teathe bee not so stronge, yet shal I so vse my tonge in the stede of my tethe, that I wyll therwith open your cobnut, that to al theim that wyll be contented with reason, it shall appere well, that it is pipped. CANI. In faythe ye be a

mete

mete aduocate for women, sense ye haue tethe in your tonge, for like wise haue they all, if they be tothlesse. CANDI. And it semeth that ye lacke teth to hold in your tong that it go not to lauesse. But nowe will I assay to knacke your nutte maister Caninius. Where ye saide, that of a purpose I skipt ouer Aristotell, there ye saied truely, In good faith so did I. And here haue at your blockehouse, oute of the whiche is shot againste women al this artillery. Sir whan I affirmed, that none of the philosophers which were honest and continent, wrate any thynge in dispraise of womankinde, I remembred euen thã your master Aristotel, and iuged him not worthie to be of that numbre, but his report much lesse to be regarded, thã the feigninges

Aristotle

of poetes, whom I haue reherſed, and for this intente. For Poetes wrate againſte women in wanton ditties, to content men with newe fangled deuiſes. But the reproche to womē, geuen by Ariſtotel, was in treating of matier weighty and ſerious, wherby it appereth, that the ſaied wordes ſo ſpitefully ſpoken, proceded only of cankred malice, wherunto he was of his own nature diſpoſed, whiche maie be of them ſhortly perceiued, that be holdeth in his warkes, none other philoſopher eſcape vnrebuked. Ne truely he was aſhamed to rent with rebukes the immortall fame of Plato his maiſter, of whoſe diuine mouthe he had twenty yeres ſucked the moſte ſwete hony of noble philoſophie, whiche malice grewe of this occaſion, as aunci-

ent

ent authoꝛs haue made therof mencion. Foꝛ as muche as where he was moꝛe curiouse in his apparaile and decking, then was conuenient to his pꝛofession, also moꝛe light in countenaunce, and dissolute in liuyng, then became an instructour of vertue and wisedom, Plato therfoꝛe pꝛeferred other his scholers befoꝛe him, whiche he very displesauntly takyng, soughte occasion to rebuke his master, whā he was dead, which he neuer darst while he was liuing. That Aristotel was dissolute & also inconstant, it maie appere by this, whiche is wꝛiten of him. foꝛ to Hermia whiche was his concubine he did sacrifice, and made solemne hymnes while she was liuyng. Can ye compare any madnesse oꝛ foly, to this mannes abuse and vnconstancy?

Maye

Maie there be so great an abuse, as to geue diuine honours to a mortall creature, also to an harlot and common sinner: what vnconstancy was in hym, whiche calleth that a creature vnperfit, to whom he did solemne sacrifice, sange deuoute hymnes, and often times kneled: To blaspheme so his goddesse, ought not this great philosopher be foule ashamed: wherfore Cannius by mine aduise, do ye not leane more to his auctoritie than vnto trueth, vertue, and honestie, but consider his nature inclined to malice, his fonde errour and vaine curiositie, and that whi che ye dispraise in women, apparaunte inconstancy. CANI. Y haue a great affection to Plato perceiue verily: but will ye deny, that a woman is of hir nature vnperfecte

perfecte? CANDI. ye mary will I. for wherin do you note her to be vnperfitte? Is it in the soule or in the bodie? CANI. In bothe of them trewely, for they be weaker than men, and haue their flesche softer, lesse heare on their visages, and their voice charper, and as I haue redde, they haue in some partes of their bodies, their boones fewer. And as concernynge the soule, they lacke hardinesse, and in perilles are timerous, more delicate then men, vnapte to peinefulnesse, except thei be therto constrained, or stered by wilfulnesse: And the witte, that they haue, is not substanciall but apishe: neuer florishyng but in vngraciousnesse, or in trimmyng themselues with pratie deuises, or excusyng their faultes with vnstudied answeres,

or

or in prety mockes or scorneful daliaunce, or to inuent mischieues to saciate their malice. In other thinges it is vnapt vnto knowlage, except one or two, which I haue red of, who in Rome haue pleaded as Oratours. But that is not to be maruailed at, seins they beyng instructed in eloquence, their domesticall exercise, I will not say chidyng, maketh them bolde to contende in pleadyng. In the partes of wisedome and ciuile policy, thei be founden vnapt, and to haue litt tell capacitie. But their moste vnperfection is their inconstancye, whiche procedeth of their said naturall debilitie. For where as the affection of muche dread or muche loue aboundeth, stabilitie lacketh, and witte littell preuaileth. Contrary to this I dare wel say ye can

make

make none euasion. CANDI. yes, & disproue al your malicious conclusion. But I pray you Caninius, let me aske you a question. Be all the bokes of your maister Aristotel of equall authoritie? CANI. ye that be they verily. CANDI. In the institution of householde keping, called Oeconomicę, Aristotel writeth in this wise. The company most according to nature, is that which is ordeined of man and woman, which was constitute, not to the intente onely to bryng forth their semblable as other beastes participatours of nature and without reason, but for loue specially, and mutual assistence. and he saith also in the same boke, and not far from thense: This company is not because that eche of them hath in euery thyng and the same al their

vertues

vertues, like profitable, but some of their vertues seme to be contrary one to an other, and yet in conclusion they agree to one purpose. for nature made man more strong and couragious, the woman more weake fearefull and scrupulouse, to the intent that she for hir feblenesse shulde be more circumspecte, the man for his strengthe muche more aduenturous. Be not these the wordes of your maister? how saye you? CANI. Where ye saie trueth I will not deny you, it is of his sentence the very pithe and effect. for he wrate in greke ye know well inough. wherfore they be not in the same wordes as ye do speke them. CANDI. It maketh no matter if I do truely interprete them. But nowe to our purpose. Is perfection and vnperfection in thynges,

ges, any thynge elles, than abundance and lacke of that, which is expedient to the end wherunto nature hath ordeined them? CANI. Naye in good sothe, for I thynke that a true definicion. CANDI. But let me se, where I called it abundance, I moughte better haue named it sufficiēce. for abundance dothe proprely signifie more than is necessarye. Sufficience descryueth the thyng with boundes and limittes, the excesse wherof is called superfluitie, and the lacke may be named necessitie. CANI. In faithe ye be to curiouse. Perdy the worde neyther made nor marred any thynge of your purpose. for abundaunce and sufficiente is commonly taken for one thyng. CANDI. ye and that hath subuerted the order of al thing. for truly wordes

Abundāçe.

Sufficiēce.

vsed in their proper signification, do bringe thinges to a plaine vnderstandynge. And where they bee muche abused and wrested frome theyr trewe meanynge, they cause soudry errours and perpetual contencion. But let vs nowe retourne to our question. Claye is a kynde of erthe softe and clammy, and for those qualities seruethe to make walles for houses, and to that end hath his perfection: Although a stone be a matter hard and consolidate, and serueth also for walles, and maketh them strōger to serue for munition. The horse hath muche strengthe, and therfore is apte for tourneis & burdeins: the sheepe is feble and fearefull, & maie therfore easily be shorne. And yet eche of these in his kynde hath his perfections. To men nature hath geuen

uen puissaunce in membres, brau-
nes hard and consolidate, the skin
thicke, perchance no bones as ye
say, to susteine outwarde labours.
And to seme the more terrible, mu-
che heare on their visage. To wo-
men she hath geuen the contrarie:
to thende and intent, whiche your
maister rehersed, that hir debilitie
shuld make hir more circumspect,
in the keppynge (saieth he) at home
suche thynges as hir husbande,
by this puissance hath gotten. for
those wordes also he added to the,
whiche are before spoken. Is not
that a company accordynge to na-
ture, where the one dilygentely
kepeth that, which the other by la-
bour prepareth: for what profiteth
it to prepare, where saulfe keppng
lacketh: In preparynge is labour
or study, of keppynge commeth vse

Geatynge & keppynge.

and commoditie, and therfore to speke indifferētly, it deserueth muche more praise than the geatyng. But nowe tel me one thing. wherin suppose you dothe a man excell all other creatures? is it in greatnesse or puissance of body? CANI. No verily. CANDI. Than wherin suppose ye? CANI. In that that his soule is adorned with reason. CANDI. Stop there I pray you a lytte ll season: what call ye reason? CANI. Why be ye now to learne? what thing is reason. CANDI. Ye by my holy dome. And this is the cause. for many men leane to their synguler opinion, iudgyng al that is contrary, to stande with no reason. wherfore I pray you make me thereof a true definicion. CANI. I wyll, to content with your fantasi, although that ye can do it I know

wel

well muche better than I. Reason is the principall parte of the soule diuine and immortal, wherby man dothe discerne good from yll. this thing whiles it discerneth or seuereth the one frome the other, it is called Discrecion: whan it taketh the one and leaueth the other, it is named Electiõ, iugement of some men. The exercise therof is called prudence, of some Circumspectiõ. And yet is euerich of these thinges nothing but reason, which to man is so propre, that lackyng it, he loseth his denominacion. CANDI. In good faith ye haue made of reson a right good descripcion. And now I perceiue that the thynge, wherby man excelleth al other creatures, is reason only. CANINI. Ye verily. CANDI. What thynke you, is reason onely in men? is it

Reason.

Discretiõ.

Election.

Prudence.

Circũspection.

not also in womenne suppose you? CANI. yes, that is it naturallye, for the worde Man, whiche I named, includeth as well woman as man, whan it is written or spoken so generally. CANDI. I am glad that I haue founde you so reasonable in talking of reason. But what saie you by sharpenesse of witte, doth it not betwene mã and beast make lyke diuersitie? CANI. No surely. for wytte is of the parte of manne that is mortall, and that is founden by dayly experience. For where the vapours in the body be pure and suttell, whiche do ascend into the brayne, the wyt becometh sharpe and delycate: And where thei be grosse ponderous and smoky, the wytte is dull and nothyng pleasant. And therfore phisicions haue experiẽced by clarifiyng and tempe-

wytte.

tẽperating the corporal humours to correcte the wytte, whiche is eyther with grosse matter oppressed, or with adust vapours smouldred or choked. But reason mought neuer be brought in to a beaste, whiche by nature lacketh it. And yet in diuerse of them haue been perceyued soo suttill wyttes. that therin mẽ haue semed to be of them vainquished. CANDI. I thynke it to be true that ye say. Than in whom reason moste dothe appere, ye will affyrme, dothe moste excell a beast in his nature. CANI. ye mayster Candidus, that maie ye be sure. CANDIDVS. And ye were agreed while ere, that to kepe diligently that which is gotten, is worthy more prayse than in the gettynge. CANI. ye, for there comethe more effecte of the keppynge. CANDI.

And so ye conclude, that the power of reason is moze in the pzudente and diligent kep ynge, than in the valiaunt oz politike geating: And that Discrection, Election, & Pzudence, whiche is all and in euerye parte reason, doo excell strengthe, wytte, and hardinesse: And consequentely they, in whome be those vertues, in that that they haue them, do excell in iuste estimacion them that be stronge, hardy, oz politike in geattynge of any thynge. CANI. ye haue well gathered to gether al that cõclusion. CANDI. Beholde Caninius, where ye bee nowe: ye haue soo muche extolled reason, that in the respecte thereof bodily strength remayneth as nothinge: foz as muche as the cozporall powers, with powers of the soule can make no cõparison. And

ye

ye haue not denied, but that this
word Man, vnto whom reason per
teineth, doth imply in it both man
and woman. And agreyng vnto
Aristotels saying, ye haue confir=
med, that prudence, whiche in ef=
fect is nothing but reason, is more
aptly applied to the woman, wher
by she is more circumspecte in ke=
pyng, as strengthe is to the man,
that he mate be more valiaunt in
geattyng. And likewise ye haue
preferred the prudence in keppyng,
for the vtilitie therof, before the
valiauntnesse in geattyng. And
semblably them which be prudent
in keppyng, before them that be on=
ly stronge and hardy in geattyng.
And so ye haue concluded, that wo
men, which are prudent in keping,
be more excellent then men in rea=
son, whiche be onely stronge and

valiaunt in geatyng. And where excellency is, there is moste perfection. Wherfore a woman is not a creature vnperfect, but as it seemeth is more perfit than manne.
CANI. Why, haue ye dalied herefore with me all this long season?
CANDI. Surely I haue vsed nether daliaunce nor sophistry: but if ye consider it well, ye shal find it but a naturall inductiō, and plaine to al them that haue any capacity. But yet haue I somwhat more to saie to you. Ye saied more ouer Caninius, that the wittes of women were apte onely to trifils and shrewdenesse, and not to wisedome and ciuile policie. I will be plaine to you, I am sory to finde in your wordes such maner of leudenesse, I crie you mercie, I wolde haue saied so muche vnientilnesse, and

in

in your own wordes so muche forgetfulnesse. CANI. What meane ye therby? CANDI. ye haue twise granted, that naturall reason is in women as well as in men. CANI. ye and what then? CANDI. Than haue women also Discrection, Election, & Prudence, which do make that wisedome, whiche perteineth to gouernaunce. And perdy, many artes and necessarie occupacions haue ben inuented by women, as I will bring now some vnto your remembrance. Latine letters were first founden by Nicostrata, called also Carmentis. The. vii. liberal artes and poetry by the. ix. maidens called the Musis. Why was Minerua honored for a goddesse? but because she founde firste in Grecia, plantyng or settynge of trees: also the vse of armour: and

Nicostrata

musa.

Minerua

as

as some do testifie, she inuented makyng of fortresses, and many necessary and notable sciences. Also that the wittes of women be not vnapt to laudable studies, it apereth by Diotima and Aspasia two honest maidens, which in all partes of philosophy were so wel lerned, that Socrates, master to Plato, nothyng disdained to come to their lessons, and called Diotima alway his maistresse. Cleobulina, the doughter of Cleobulus, one of the seuen wise men of Grece, wrate diffuse and mysticall questions in heroicall versis. Also Leoncium a woman, excelled all men of hir time in wisedome and eloquence, in so muche as she wrate againste Theophrast, the most eloquent disciple of Aristotel, in womens defence, whiche boke if it nowe had remai-

remained, shulde haue ben sufficient to haue put you to silence. If the lernyng and wisedome of the lady Cansandza, doughter to king Cassandra
Priamus, had ben regarded moze then the counsaile of flatterers, the citie of Troy and kingdom of Frigia, had lenger remained, And Priamus with his noble succession hadde many yeres rained. Behold our progenitours the ancient Romains in all extreme dangers, whan other counsaile vtterly failed, did not they resorte to the bokes of Sibilla Cumana, called also Amalthea: and pursuing hir aduise, which she had there declared, did they not escape the perils whiche than were imminente: Hundredes of suche women are in stories remembred, but for spede of time I will passe them ouer, sens

Sybylla

I

I truste that these be sufficiente to proue, that the hole kinde of women be not vnapt vnto wisedome, as he haue supposed. As concernyng strength and valiaunt courage, whiche ye surmise to lacke in them, I could make to you no lesse replicacion, and by old stories and late experience proue, that in armes women haue ben found of no littell reputacion, but I will omit that for this time, for as muche as to the more parte of wise menne it shal not sound muche to their commendacion: Sauynge that we nowe haue one example amonge vs, as well of fortitude as of al other vertues, whiche in mine opinion shall not be inconuenient, to haue at this time declared, and so of this matier to make a conclusion. CANINI. And I haue mine eares

eares therto prepared. CANDI. The best matier is euergood to be spared, vntil the tale be almost at an ende, and than shall the herers with the length therof be litel offe= ded. Sir ther dwelleth here by me a lady, late a gret queene and wife to Odenatus kyng of Palmirie, whiche is a citie and countrey in Surry, hir name is Zenobia: she hath had of our host victory twise and nowe late was taken prisoner by Aurelian the emperour, al be it for hir nobilitie vertue and cou= rage, she was pardoned of hir life, and a faire house is appointed to hir in this village, she is well ler= ned in greke, and doth competent= ly vnderstand latine, but excellent ly the Egyptian language. She hir self teacheth hir childzen good letters, and beyng nowe vacant

Zenobia

from

from other busineſſe, writeth as they ſay of Alexandria and the orient eloquent stories. I haue boden her to ſupper, it wyl not nowe be longe or ſhe come hyther. And whan ye doo here her, I dare wel saye, ye wyll be chaunged frome your opinion, and confeſſe, that in womenne is bothe courage, conſtance, and reaſon. CANINIVS. But I pray you of this matier say to her nothynge. CANDI. Ah, I ſee well ye be loth to come to a rekenyng. Thus do they all that be of your facion, In wiſe womens abſence ſpeke reprochefullye, and whan they be preſent, flatter them pleſauntly. But lo where ſhe commeth, let vs mete with her. Your ladiſhip is very hartely welcome. ZENO. Ye haue cauſed me to do, that I haue vſed very ſeldome.

Can=

CANDI. What is that madame?
ZENO. To be out of myne owne house at this tyme of the nyghte.
CANDI. I thanke therfore your ladiship. for I thinke the same, but I wyll promyse you, nothing shal come to youre hearyng or syghte, but that bothe to here and see may stand with your worshyp. ZENO. That I hartely prate you, for the remẽbrance of my princely astate maye not susteine woordes of dishonestie. And because I am nowe as a priuate personne, I feare the common succesſe of familiaritie.
CANDI. What is that madame I praye you hartely. ZENO. For I drede infamy, I tell you playnly, more than euer I didde the losse of my libertie. CANDI. No such thig shall happen madame I promise you trewely. for here ye shal fynde

no men but of honeſte condicion. ZENOBIA. Yet ſome in deuiſyng with ladies, reioyſyng to be therfore hadde in a certaine ſuſpicion, will by the way of daliaunce conuey from them ſome thyng, whiche beyng ſhewed, do ingender in the beholders ſome diſhoneſt opinion. Diuerſe be not aſhamed, to make their aduant, that they haue receiued, whiche of hir that they ſpeke of, was neuer ones proffered. Theſe thynges maiſter Candidus haue made me a fraide, to come to ſuppers and bankettes. CANI. Mary that is well ſaide. And yet ſome time ſuche thinges haue ben ſene offered. CANDI. Perchance of ſome yong maidens, which did it of courteſy. yet much more hath ben aſked that hath ben denaied. I haue knowen it my ſelfe, I pro-

miſe

myse you faythfully. ZENOBIA. Truely I lyke not suche maner of foly, I haue ben brought vp in other study. CANDI. I praye you madame, let me aske you a question: but firste pleaseth it you to sit downe and reste you: for I trowe your supper is not yet redy. ZEN. Nowe what is youre demaunde, speake on hardily. CAN. Of what age was your ladishyp when firste ye were maried? ZENO. Twenty yeres and aboue. CANDI. It was great pitie that ye soo longe taryed. ZENO. But it was the more for my commoditie. For I knewe the better what longed to my duetie. CANDI. Your duetie madame, what meane ye therby? ZENOBIA. For by my study in moral philosophy, wherin I spent the yeres betwen sixtene and twen

ty, I perceiued, that without prudence & constanci, women mought be brought lightly into errour & foly, and made therefore vnmete for that company, wherevnto thei wer ordeined: I meane, to be assistence and comfort to man through their fidelitie, whiche other bestes are not, excepte thei be by the force of manne thereto constrayned. I foūd also, that Justice techeth vs women, to honour our husbandes nexte after god: which honour resteth in due obedience, wherby mutuall loue betwyxte theym is in a more feruence. for vndoubtedly no woman hym loueth, whose hate or displeasure she nothyng feareth.

Justice. Also Justice restrayneth vs to do

Fortitude. any thynge, whiche is not semely. By Fortitude are we stil kept in a vertuouse constancy; as wel in re-

sistyng

sistyng affections and wanton per
suasion, as also to susteyne (whan
they do happen) afflictions pacy=
ently. But in a woman, no vertue
is equal to Temperaunce, wher=
by in hir wordes and dedes she al
way vseth a iust moderacion, kno=
wynge whan tyme is to speke, and
whan to kepe silence, whan to bee
occupyed, and whan to bee merie.
And if she measure it to the wil of
hir husbande, she dooeth the more
wysely: except it may tourne them
bothe to losse or dyshonestie. yet
than shuld she seme rather to giue
him wise counsail, than to appere
disobedient or sturdy. In euery of
these thynges consisted my duetie,
whiche I shulde not soo wel haue
knowen, if to my husbande I had
soner be wedded. CANI. In dede
ye had been past learning thereof,

Temperãce in women.

whan ye had ones ben bedded. ZE. In good faythe ye saie truely. for whan I had ben out of the dread of my father (who kept me in this study continually) and had ones tasted the pleasaunt deuises, whiche are prouyded for queenes and other great ladyes, ye maye well suppose I shulde soone haue loste that delectation, whiche I had in study. CAN. Ye saie euen truthe by the faithe of my body. but madame, after that ye were maried, what profit was to you, the knowlege of letters? ZENO. Muche, maister Candidus I promyse you verily. for duryng the lyfe of my noble husband of famous memory, I was neuer herd or sene, saie or do any thynge, whiche mought not contente hym, or omytte any thyng, whiche shulde delite hym,

suche

ſuche circũſpection good lernynge mynyſtred vnto me, that in huntynge and other paſtymes, I retayned alway ſuche grauitie, that of any dyſſolute appetyte, none coulde conceyue of me any ſuſpicion: and yet my learnyng was had of none honeſte man in any derysyon. But after the deathe of my huſbande, I founde of learnyng a meruaylous treaſure. For whan I conſydered the ſtate of thinges, whyche than happened togyther, what daunger was to the realme imminente for lacke of a gouernoure, and that my chyldren for theyr tender youthe ſhulde be lyttell regarded, and I being a woman, ſhoulde nothyng be feared. Alſo what tutours my chyldren ſhulde haue, it was veraie vncertaine. Ambicion alway raignyng

in euery countrey, whiche can not gladly suffer in any one persone suche maner of soueraintie, that vnder the name of protection, he shulde haue in subiection all the nobilitie. And althoughe that suche one mought happen to be, yet hauyng in remembraunce as wel auncient histories as late exaumples, I dradde, leste in so greatte authoritie Ambicion and Auarice mought cause men to forget theyr obedience truste and fidelitee. I considered also, that the realme of Palmyry, was enuironed with enemyes. for on the one syde was the hoste of the Romaines, whiche alwaie wayted to fynde opportunitie, to enuade my realme, and to subdue it vnder their empire. The theues of Araby wer on the other syde, whiche al ready were entred

Ambicion. Auarice.

the

the marches, and spoiled the countrey. The kynge of Media, to be discharged of his tribute, ioyned with our ennemies, willynge to bynge my realme in perpetuall captiuitie. Was it any meruayle, if all these thynges did excedyngly trouble me? CANDI. But finally madame, what remedy founde ye? ZENO. After that I hadde a littell bethoughte me, I determined to prepare remedies quickely, and to susteine foztune at al times pacientlp. And to the intente that the name of a woman, shulde not amonge the people be had in contempt, I bsed so my procedynges, that none of them mought be said to be doen womanly. wherfoze I sate alway abzode amonge my nobles and counsailours, and saied mine opinion, so that it seemed to

theim all, that it stode with good reason. I came often times among the people, and remembred vnto them, the libertie and honour whiche they had receiued, by the excellent prowes of my noble husband, shewynge to theim my children, whiche for tender age than were but feeble, exhortyng theim with sundry occasions to retein their fidelitie. I visited al the hole realme and the marches, reedified fortresses, and newe made also sundrie munitions. Moreouer, I caused good lawes to be published, obseruyng theim firste in mine owne householde, and caused them in al other places to be well executed. I made Justice chiefe ruler of mine affection, and in all consultations wolde I be present, where I herde all other speke firste, that I wold

not

not be ignorant: and than shewed mine aduise, wherin I seined, not to be negligente. Touchynge my seruauntes I vsed such a diligent scrutiny, that they were alway persones of singuler honestie. By this maner industry I quietly gouerned the realme of Palmirie. And also added muche more to mine empire, not soo muche by force, as by renoume of iuste and politike gouernaunce, whiche all men had in suche admiracion, that diuerse of our said ennemies, whiche againste the realme erste did conspire, and had inuaded my iurisdiction, chase rather to leaue their hostilitie, and to remaine in our subiection, than to retourne to their own countrey. To the which wisedome and policie I attained by the studie of noble philosophy.

Also

Also therby I acquired such magnanimitie, that nowe I kepe in as straite subiection al affections, and passions, as the Romaines dooe nowe me and my childzen. All this considered, my studie was to me muche moze commodious, because it was so longe oz I were maried. Wherfoze I maie conclude, that I had well taried. CANDI. Ye haue saied very well by the faith of my body. And all that ye haue spoken I haue befoze herd as wel of your frendes as of your ennemies confessed. Howe saie you Cantnius, be you any thynge chaunged in your opinion? CANI. I wolde neuer haue loked foz suche a conclusion. I see well enoughe, that women, beyng wel and vertuously brought vp, do not onely with men participate in reason, but som

also

also in fidelitie and constancie be equall vnto them. CANDIDVS. Madam your supper is redy, may it like you to enter in towarde it. ZENO. With right good will: but yet if this ientilman hath aughte to saie againste women, I am not vnprouided for to defende theim. CANI. No madame, I am by your ladiship all redy satisfied, he is wise that with reason is chorte=ly contented. And where reason serueth not, sylence is praysed. ZENOBIA. Yet a good minde, in sylence, is euer well occupied. CANDIDVS. And he that thyn=keth well, and speaketh trueth, is most to be loued. Madame, I wil leade you the waye into my house. ZENOBIA. With good will I folowe you. CANI. The conclu=sion is good, where bothe partes

are

are pleased. And if they bothe be wise, it maketh no matter though fooles be offended.

¶ Thus endeth the defence of good women.

LONDINI in ædibus Thomæ Berthcleti typis impress.
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FACE AVT TACE